

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Bunmahon - Bun Machan</b>	Ref: <b>1050</b>
County: <b>Waterford</b>	Mark: <b>265</b>
Category: <b>A</b>	Date(s): <b>09/06/2023</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	21
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	25
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>265</b>

### **Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:**

Bunmahon is very warmly welcomed back to the Tidy Towns competition after a hiatus of 26 years. If community spirit & can do attitude could be bottled, Bunmahon would be sitting on a goldmine. What has been achieved since October of last year is remarkable. This collective engagement demonstrates what a small community group can achieve & how they can alter their future for the better. It is noteworthy that your committee is small yet you can garner an astonishing number of volunteers for various projects. Your 5 Year Development Plan is ambitious & your adjudicator would put money on Bunmahon attaining these goals. The strategies & tactics you have employed are not cookie cutter. It is an original idea to take your lead from the youth of the community in determining their needs & they certainly have plenty to contribute. Engagements with agencies, local businesses & community groups are the bedrock for progress, as you need them onboard to progress your plans. Some communities when faced with a lack of county council personnel to complete municipal tasks would have thrown in the towel. Instead, you gratefully accepted the financial supports & took on the work yourselves & a mighty fine job you have accomplished. It seems you have covered every traditional & modern communication medium. However, we were unable to access your website, either through the provided link or independently.

### **Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:**

Bunmahon extends quite a distance from end to end & the streetscape has a mix of well-kept buildings & ones that require upgrading or remediation. You might provide in next year's submission updates on vacant or derelict buildings. It would be hoped that the twin pronged approach of the Derelict Site levy & the Vacant Property Refurbishment grants might propel owners into action. Bunmahon has some incredible heritage buildings that could be put back into use for alternative purposes – Community Hub/Remote Working Hub/Accommodation for older residents/Hostel/Creative studio spaces etc. The possibilities are endless. The Surf School is akin to an art installation & a delight to behold on turning the corner. Well done to them & on adjudication day they were busy in the water teaching surfing skills. If they could perform the same transformation on the unroofed space across the car park and the galvanized gate then this area would be greatly enhanced. Perhaps, potentially another changing room? We look forward to seeing the wall mural that is planned for next year. The signs of your work were evident in the freshly painted public toilets exterior & bay, the bridge railings, lighting standards & other street furniture. The colour choice is perfect for a seaside location. The Geological Garden provides a most interesting walk & its location adjoining the picnic area is ideal. The signage here could be improved as the first time visitor easily misses it. The UNESCO Copper Coast Geopark visitor centre has a perfect home in the previously disused church building & it is fantastic that it also serves as a community centre. The leisure area with the children's playground, astro turf & exercise zone provides a variety of amenities. The playground is well planned & colourful. However the other two areas need softening, as it is a vast area of hard

surfaces with little greenery. A landscape architect would offer you ideas. The National School, Scoil Cnoc Machan, was not to be missed with its freshly painted yellow boundary walls. The tennis courts are a wonderful amenity & there was intense cleaning work taking place on adjudication within & outside the courts. This may relate to one of your future projects, the Riverbend Park. The walks available offer incredible vistas in particular the Trá na mBó walk although the combined boardwalk & riverwalk is equally enjoyable.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The Picnic area transformation is outstanding. Your adjudicator saw on social media how misused the area was in previous years. The people power required to present the area to this standard is testament to your focus on achieving your set goals. On adjudication day, the mulched areas under the trees were busy with thrushes & blackbirds & a heron was stalking prey in the river alongside. It is now an excellent amenity. However, you referenced accessibility for all & your adjudicator could not see where a wheelchair could easily move from the car park to the picnic area. Perhaps this ramp or adjusted kerbing has yet to be completed. When you plan events, you plan big. The Tree Planting day in April garnered fantastic support & what an excellent idea to have each child adopt a tree. 200 trees sown in a day is quite the achievement. It was lovely to see the tags with their names & the species of tree. In years to come, they will recall the day as they look up at the tree they have planted. It would be hoped that you have a high rate of successful planting. It is good to see you have adopted the approach of planting in the ground where possible rather than container planting. During this process ensure that the growing medium is correct, as this will reduce the need for feeding & watering. The pictures of the vibrant muscari blooms & daffodils present a wonderful image. The planter at the public toilets was planted up on adjudication day. Some trailing plants like bidens or bacopa would soften the sides. When considering container planting, always consult the All-Ireland Pollinator plan for ideas. <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FINAL-All-Ireland-Pollinator-Plan-2021-2025-WEB.pdf> Is there a need for the containers at the start of the Trá na mBó walk as the seating is so vibrant & a few more flowering shrubs behind the wall may suffice? You referenced freshly tiled & decorated planters in the car park however the ones in situ could not be described in that way. Perhaps this is future project.

### **Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:**

It is fantastic that the boardwalk allows some protection to the Marram grasses on the dunes. Have you worked with Clean Coasts yet? They carry out Marram grass planting in sand dune habitats to prevent soil erosion. The walk up to Trá na mBó Cove is an excellent example of a nature walk.

You are fortunate to have a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) adjacent to the beach area. There is no doubt that this factor will have an impact on your future plans & adjustments may need to be made to minimize disruption to the natural environment. It would appear from the wildlife brochure that the sand dunes boast a wealth of interesting flora & fauna. As a community, you have a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the National Biodiversity Data Centre surveys. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/monitoring/> Families can conduct many of these surveys, as they are fun & engaging for all ages.

Your plans for phase 2 of the biodiversity garden are exciting & we look forward to updates next year. Please do ensure you make use of the website, <https://pollinators.ie/> when finalizing your plans.

The National School has a wonderful opportunity to create pathways through their long meadows & also to plant a small orchard. The possibilities there are endless due to the scale of the space they have available to them.

The stonewalls, wildflower & grass verges around the village are a delight to see & make for an interesting walk. The wildflower meadow at the bridge was very colourful. It is very important that local wildflowers are encouraged rather than using wildflower mixes that could introduce invasive species. Dublin Naturalists' Field Club shared an important document & it is an important read for all Tidy towns groups. <https://dnfc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Wildflower-Mixtures-LR.pdf>

The wooden painted notices the children created for biodiversity areas may need a facelift as they are becoming illegible. Perhaps a coat of varnish might provide them with greater longevity.

### **Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:**

Well done on investing in several rainwater harvesting containers, your plants will thank you as they thrive on rainwater in contrast to chlorinated water. Also it is good practice from an environmental viewpoint. So too is the investment in self watering planters as they offer the opportunity for water storage.

The Beach Box is an excellent idea however it could not be located at the car park on adjudication day despite a good search.

It is great to have the bike rack restored as Waterford is now a destination point for both amateur & serious cyclists following the success of the Greenway. There is no doubt that secure bike parking is an attraction for cycling enthusiasts.

Composting is essential for all communities & it would be hoped, in time, you can complete a Master Composting course & hold workshops for the community. There are many misgivings & misunderstandings about in relation to home composting. A demonstration can relieve those anxieties & encourage more householders to begin the process. The National School needs assistance here too as their compost bins seem to be out of action.

It appears there were raised beds for vegetables & fruit at the National School however they now appear redundant. The Tidy Towns Handbook is an excellent guide in this area. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Bunmahon's young artists are delivering a very clear message to residents & visitors alike re the damage to their

environment of both littering & dog fouling. It was certainly a good idea this year to avail of the redundant poles in order to display the various posters. However, we would encourage you to complete an audit on all redundant street furniture, temporary commercial signs & other unnecessary fixtures & liaise with Waterford County Council on their removal as they create unnecessary clutter. A central location for the art could then be found where it can continue to have an impact.

The Bottle Bank area was free of litter however it would appear to be missing its signage behind the receptacles, judging from the 3 vacant poles. Also a power washing of the receptacles would create a better first impression. Unfortunately, someone had left 2 tied black bags full of rubbish beside one of the car park bins. No doubt a regular problem for seaside locations like Bunmahon.

There is a lot of signage in both car parks general environs that is of varying standard & condition. A coordinated approach to signage in these locations would reduce the clutter. The front boundary of the astro turf playing pitch has a lot of items located there – bin, an ESB substation, another tall silver box & an obscured notice. A number of communities have painted the junction or control boxes, with permission of course. Check out Galway, Limerick, Cork & Wicklow for street art. You could contact your local authority's arts officer or Creative Ireland coordinator. A clean environment, free from litter & pollution, is the least we can do for Mother Nature. On adjudication day, the view of the Mahon river was lovely, devoid of any unnatural items. Well done to the team of water based enthusiasts that got stuck in cleaning up the river as part of the National Spring Clean. All the other volunteers are to be commended & it would be hoped that there is a noticeable reduction in the litter collected next year. It would be interesting to determine the top 5 most littered items located. Clean Coasts also hold a nationwide Big Beach Clean in September annually, perhaps one for your diaries. It would be hoped that having community involvement on regular litter patrols would heighten their watchful eye for any strewn debris outside of the organized litter collection times. Check out "The Pure Mile Project" as an initiative. <http://www.pureproject.ie/the-pure-mile/> What a novel idea, "Bring a Bucket on your Walk" – on adjudication day, all the buckets were spoken for, as none were available. Hopefully, a good indicator of interest! Indeed, your storage container was so well painted that it blended into the background as your adjudicator was attempting to locate it – no longer an eyesore!

### **Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:**

Seaview Terrace is simply charming & the houses & gardens are well presented. The pedestrian pathway from the road was blooming with valerian, oxeye daisies & dog rose.

It would be hoped when all residences at Copper Hill are occupied the residents could form an association & work on a landscaping plan for the estate.

There are some lovely examples of vernacular architecture & xeriscape gardens, ideal in a seaside location. Derelict & vacant houses have already been referenced. It has to be noted that some of the vacant houses are freshly painted & well maintained.

Many seaside locations have the tricky issue of seasonal residents who can sometimes be hard to reach & may not be as invested in the community given their short stays. However, many are delighted to participate in projects & get to know their community. It takes a lot of work to establish & maintain these relationships but many times they can tap you into expertise that is not locally available.

### **Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:**

The approach road from Dunhill presents one with a stunning vista of the bay & village. The run in to the village by the new fencing with the verges left long & the edges trimmed creates a lovely entrance. The new pedestrian crossings are a welcome addition. Similarly the approach roads from Stradbally & Dungarvan have well tended verges, hedgerows & stone walls awash with wildflowers & wild grasses.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Bear in mind, the Tidy Towns competition is akin to a marathon, not a race so take your time & as you have done to date, put the effort into planning before jumping to action. You have the opportunity to learn from others who have gone before you, both from their mistakes & triumphs. The Tidy Towns Handbook is an excellent guide & many specialists have contributed so ensure you make good use of the information available.

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/>

It would be great to have one of your Junior Tidy Towns members contribute to the Tidy towns monthly newsletter.

There is a store of knowledge to digest within these editions – a winter reading list!

We will follow your progress with interest, as the community spirit in Bunmahon will allow the village to achieve what ever you set your minds to.